

# Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC)

## Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)

### 2007 DROUGHT AND BURN BAN SITUATION REPORT # 20 6 March 2008, 1300 Hours

*New Information in Bold Italic Type*

#### SUMMARY

Statewide precipitation for the previous water year (1 October 2006 through 30 September 2007) was below normal. Statewide precipitation for the period from October 1, 2006 until February 21, 2008 was below normal and statewide precipitation in each successive shorter time period is below normal. Statewide precipitation for the period from February 1, 2008 to February 21, 2008 is 95% of normal. Precipitation greater than 85% of normal is considered to be in the normal range. The relatively wet period from February 1 until February 21 has had very little effect on accumulated precipitation deficits across the Commonwealth.

#### EXECUTIVE ACTION

**EOC Activation:** The Virginia Emergency Operations Center is at ***Response Operations*** and is operating with ***augmented staff in response to severe weather that impacted the Commonwealth on 4 March.*** .

**State of Emergency:** Governor Timothy M. Kaine declared a Statewide Emergency on 18 October 2007 and imposed a statewide ban on all open burning. The statewide ban on open burning was lifted by Governor Timothy M. Kaine on 15 November. The Statewide Emergency remains in effect to deal with potential or actual drought related issues.

Governor Kaine requested that the Secretary of the US Department of Agriculture declare Virginia a statewide disaster area due to reductions in farm production caused by drought and high temperatures in 2007. The Acting US Secretary of Agriculture designated 78 additional counties and 34 independent cities as primary natural disaster areas on 18 October 2007 due to reductions in farm production caused by drought and high temperatures that occurred from January 1, 2007, and continuing.

Governor Kaine sent a letter to all localities dated 29 November 2007 advising them that the most effective water restrictions are those developed at the local level and asked that localities review their drought water conservation and contingency plans associated with public waterworks and if there was no current drought plan, one should be developed. Governor Kaine also asked localities to review their local ordinances requiring mandatory non-essential water use restrictions during declared emergencies and assure that the ordinances are consistent with the Virginia Drought Assessment and Response Plan and if the locality has not adopted such ordinances, they should consider the development and adoption of these. DEQ – [COV Drought Response Plan](#)

**Executive Order:** [Executive Order 57 \(2007\)](#)

**ESF 15 – External Affairs:** Public Affairs Officers from VDEM, Department of Environmental Quality, Department of Forestry and Department of Health and representatives from VDH Office of Drinking Water developed and presented a comprehensive state communication plan to the Drought Monitoring Task Force on 22 February and are incorporating recommendations into the plan, prior to submission for final approval.

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### WEATHER FORECAST

**Southwest VA: Thursday, 6 Mar: Sunny; high temperatures in the high 50's to low 60's; light and variable winds. Thursday night: Mostly cloudy with a 20% chance of rain after midnight; low temperatures in the upper 30's to low 40's; light and variable winds. Friday, 7 Mar: Cloudy; 80% chance of rain/drizzle; high temperatures in the low to mid 50's; southeast winds 10 to 15 MPH with gusts up to 25 MPH. Friday night: Cloudy; 70% chance of rain/drizzle; low temperatures in the mid 30's to low 40's; south winds 5 to 10 MPH with gusts up to 20 MPH.**

### OPERATIONS SECTION

- ESF 5 – Emergency Management:** VDEM posting event related items to WebEOC under event titled “WebEOC, 2007-10 Drought and Burn Ban”; Participating as member of the Drought Monitoring Task Force; assessing the impact across the Commonwealth; limited exemption of hours worked for hay and feed carriers was extended until 0600 hours, 15 April 2008. VDEM Operations Director, Harry Colestock, and VDEM Recovery and Mitigation Director, George Roarty, attended a North Carolina Emergency Management Forum in Asheville, North Carolina, that discussed the drought in the Southeastern US. Points discussed for North Carolina were:
- Description of a tiered system to identify water systems vulnerability to drought and a group of functional state task forces to address specific drought issues
  - State actions included water basin meetings, tracking of public water system status and promotion of conservation (especially industries and big users).
  - NC Governor Easley Press Release issued on 14 January detailed new actions to combat the drought.
    - Governor told the state's 30 most vulnerable communities that they need to take actions now to ensure adequate water during the potential summer drought
    - Governor directed his Dept of Natural Resources to quickly identify the funding needed to make sure undue amounts of water are not being lost to leaks and other structural problems
    - Governor also requested that public water systems adopt conservation-based rate structures to encourage both residential and commercial customers to save water
  - Virginia's plans and current efforts were discussed and included background of recent droughts, development of the Virginia Drought Assessment and Response Plan, current drought impacts, Governor's Emergency Declaration, resources in readiness, water system problems exacerbated by drought and potential funding and other resources to mitigate the impacts of the drought situation. [Limited Exemption of Hours Worked for Hay and Feed Carriers](#)

**State Warning Point:** Normal operations

**Local Liaison:** VDEM Region Four Coordinator is attending the monthly water planning/drought issues meetings held by the Lenowisco Planning District Commission. VDEM Region 4 Coordinator has contacted Lee County requesting an update on their water situation and is monitoring the Town of Dungannon water infrastructure issue.

### EMERGENCY SERVICES BRANCH

- ESF 4 – Firefighting:** *The Department of Forestry reports that, since January 1, 2008, 573 wildfires have burned 17,350 acres, and damaged or destroyed 10 homes and 25 other structures.* The most intense single day of wildfire activity in the preceding 70 years occurred on February 10, 2008. During this event wildfires driven by unusually high winds were reported in 62 localities across the Commonwealth. There were 357 reported fires that burned almost 14,000 acres, and damaged or destroyed 9 homes, 19 other structures and 7 vehicles. The most active portion of Virginia's spring fire season is March and April. The potential for wildfires can change quickly in the short term, however, all indications are that this years activity will be higher than

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average. Extended drought into the summer can also create wildfire issues with ground fires in the south east part of the state that can contribute to substantial smoke issues in terms of public health as well as with road closures. [Outdoor Fires Unlawful Before 4 p.m.](#); [Local Burn Ban Restrictions](#); [VDOF Fire Summation Report 6 March 08](#)

**ESF 8 – Public Health & Medical Services:** Virginia Department of Health and Office of Drinking Water continue to monitor and stand by for consultation and coordination. VDH looked at the Town of Dunganon's daily demand and water plant capacity in reference to an adequate storage tank and suggested to the Town Engineer that the 250,000 gallon tank could be replaced with a 100,000 gallon tank.

### **HUMAN SERVICES BRANCH**

**ESF 11 – Agriculture and Natural Resources:** Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services reported that according to the USDA Crop Weather Report released on February 4, 2008, topsoil moisture was adequate. However, producers are concerned about low subsoil moisture, and the dry trend does not help prospects for the 2008 growing season. Significant rainfall over the last month has helped to relieve drought conditions in the western part of the state. While the Commonwealth is still experiencing deficit rainfall, the future impact of the continued drought cannot be determined at this time. As a result of the hay shortages caused by the 2007 drought, the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission has allocated \$500,000.00 to livestock producers in the Southwest Virginia counties of Bland, Buchanan, Carroll, Dickenson, Grayson, Lee, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, and Wythe. All Virginia localities have access to federal drought disaster assistance. [VDACS Drought Related Information](#); [VDACS Hay Clearing House](#)

The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries reported no significant change in the past month in streamflows or reservoir levels related to recreational activities. Recreation has been impacted minimally due primarily to the limited seasonal demand. All boat access ramps are open in spite of the lower water levels. There have been some delays in trout stockings due to low streamflows in the western portion of the state.

***The US Drought Monitor reports that precipitation events that impacted the Commonwealth will be analyzed next week for improvement to drought status. D1 conditions were pushed in eastern Virginia in response to low streamflows associated with the recent dryness.*** The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality chairs the Drought Monitoring Task Force and reported that drought conditions have remained relatively stable over the Commonwealth during the last month. The area of extreme drought in Southwest Virginia has improved to a rating of severe drought and a narrow band of extreme drought conditions has developed along the North Carolina border in south-central Virginia. The NOAA seasonal drought outlook through May 2008 indicates that drought conditions may improve in the majority of the Commonwealth with the potential for minor improvement in southeastern third of Virginia. The long-range seasonal outlook calls for above normal temperatures for the entire Commonwealth through May 2008. The long-range seasonal outlook calls for equal chances of below normal, normal and above normal precipitation for Southwest and Northern Virginia and below normal precipitation for the remainder of the Commonwealth through May 2008. [US Drought Monitor - VA](#); [US Seasonal Drought Outlook](#); [DMTF Report 25 February 2008](#)

### **INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT BRANCH**

**ESF 1 – Transportation:** The Virginia Department of Transportation and the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles jointly authorized a temporary waiver of registration and license requirements along with normal weight and width restrictions for the purpose of ensuring essential emergency relief supplies reach the disaster area in a timely manner. [Waiver to Carriers Specifically Transporting Hay and Feed Products within the Commonwealth](#)

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**ESF 3 – Public Works & Engineering:** The Virginia Department of Health has not reported any impacts to public water supplies that have compromised their ability to provide the needs of their customers. 40 systems have initiated water conservation measures; 10 mandatory water conservation requirements and 30 voluntary water conservation requirements. The reduction in conservation requirements is likely reflective of decrease water demands during the winter season and is down from a high of 64 systems in November 2007. It is likely that additional systems will initiate water conservation requirements with the onset of the growing season.

Waterworks are encouraged to develop water conservation and contingency plans and local governments are encouraged to adopt local water conservation ordinances. [DEQ Water Conservation Tips](#)

### **PLANNING SECTION**

**Situation/Documentation Unit:** Preparing and distributing weekly Situation Reports, monitoring WebEOC entries and maintaining situational awareness. ***Next Situation Report will be issued Thursday, 13 March 2008.***

### **LOCAL ACTIVITIES**

Wise County declared a local emergency on 31 October due to drought conditions that caused a severe raw water supply shortage to retail water customers. The Mayor and Town Council of Appalachia along with Wise County declared a water emergency and implemented conservation measures and prohibited non-essential water usage. An Emergency Virginia Water Permit was issued by the VA Department of Environmental Quality that permits withdrawal of 500,000 gallons per day from the Powell River and pumps it to their reservoir. Towns of Appalachia and Big Stone Gap are working on an interconnecting pipe with an estimated cost of \$500,000.

Lee County reported to the VDEM Region 4 Coordinator that at their current rate of water usage they would be out of water within 30 days. Lee County has not declared a local emergency and has not requested any official assistance at this time. The intake pipe at KVS Quarry needs to be relocated to deeper water. VDEM Recovery and Mitigation is assisting with contacts for possible funding sources to provide financial assistance in relocation of the intake pipe. Lee County has a contract with the Arthur-Shawnee System in Tennessee as an alternate source of water. Lee County is working on an agreement with the Town of Jonesville as an alternate source of water.

The Town of Dungannon and Scott County declared a local emergency on 9 November due to a water infrastructure issue involving the Town of Dungannon water system. The Virginia Rural Water Association has loaned leak detection equipment and staff to assist with leak detection operations. Scott County Emergency Management reported on 5 February that the public water supply storage tank level had dropped to less than 2 feet out of 39 feet when full. Examination of the ground level tank revealed what appeared to be holes in the bottom of the tank. ***The metal tank floor was replaced and identified holes in the tank were repaired. As of 5 March, the tank held 7 feet of water and residents at all elevations have water.*** Water personnel continue leak detection operations and the boil water notice remains in effect. The Town Engineer is developing plans for temporary service. The town has not requested any assistance from Scott County or the Commonwealth.

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